

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's thorough search and examination of the present patent application.

Claims 1-7 have been amended and claims 10-14 have been added to define applicants' invention.

Claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being unpatentable over Levitan (U.S. Patent No. 5,864,823). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicants' claim 1, as amended, defines a method for managing rentals of real estate and personal property items. More particularly, claim 1 includes "receiving rental property information," "storing" the information in "at least one database," and "providing a plurality of customers with access" the database, including "enabling browsing said database and selecting at least one of a real estate and personal property item to be rented." Thus, claim 1 provides a method for managing rentals for both real estate and personal property items, and performs the method over a data communication network.

Applicants have carefully reviewed Levitan and respectfully submit that Levitan does not teach or suggest the features of applicants' claim 1. Levitan is directed to an integrated virtual telecommunication system for e-commerce that (a) distributes advertisements to interested recipients "only via one-way nonaddressable television media", and (b) transmits "orders from recipients to advertisers via two-way addressable Internet media" (see abstract). Levitan does not teach or suggest receiving rental property information, storing the information in at least one database, and enabling customers to browse the database(s) and select real estate and/or personal property items to be rented. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's conclusion that Levitan teaches providing "access" to the database, as shown by Fig. 2, element 18. Element 18 in Levitan refers to a Internet servers that is provided "so that recipients' computers wouldn't need to be connected to television" (see column 5, line 11-15). However, unlike applicants' claim 1, Levitan does not provide access to at least one database that stores rental property information. Instead, recipients in Levitan can respond to an advertisement by selecting a "Link" to the *advertiser's* web site "[i]f the advertiser has a Web site" (see column 7, lines 36-42). This is patentably different from applicants' claim 1 which defines receiving rental property

information, storing the rental property information in at least one database, and providing customers with access to the at least one database that stores rental property information. Levitan merely includes links to web sites that are independently operated by advertisers.

In particular, Levitan teaches a system that delivers a multimedia presentation of a merchandise (for human attention), and a preliminary message regarding the message for computer processing (see column 3, lines 10-25). Each preliminary message is “processed by [a] computer that stores recipient’s profile data, and if the profile indicates an interest, the corresponding advertisement is selected and its presentation is recorded at the time of transmission.” Furthermore, Levitan is directed to “home shopping system” for a “virtual store” which is identified as important for “supermarkets,” “department stores” and many other businesses which “*sell* a large number of different products” (see column 3, lines 35-44, emphasis added). Moreover, Levitan provides “fast local and global delivery of newspapers, magazines, books, music, video[,] software” and other non-rentable items. Thus, Levitan does not teach or suggest a method for *renting* anything. Applicants submit that a method of renting of property is materially different from a method of selling property, and that Levitan is patentably different from applicants’ claim 1.

Therefore, for the foregoing reasons, applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, as amended, is allowable over Levitan.

Independent claims 7 and 10 include similar features and limitations and, for the same reasons, applicants submit claims 7 and 10 are allowable over Levitan.

Claims 2-6, 8, 9 and 11-14 depend directly or indirectly from claims 1, 7 and 10, respectively, and are, therefore, patentable for the same reasons, as well as because of the combination of features in those claims with the features set forth in the claim(s) from which they depend.

Claims 4-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over the combination of Levitan, in view of Johnson (U.S. Patent No. 6,529,885). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Johnson discloses a method for securing and carrying out bank transactions. Although the transactions may involve real estate, Johnson does not teach or suggest managing rental of real estate. Further, Johnson does not teach or suggest providing access to at least one database

that includes enabling browsing the database and selecting real estate and/or a personal property item to be rented. Thus, Johnson does not supply elements of applicants' claims 1, 7 and 10 that are missing from the teachings of Levitan. Even assuming, for the sake of argument, that one were to combine the teachings of Levitan and Johnson, as the Examiner has done, applicants' claims 1, 7 and 10, still would not be taught because the resulting combination would not manage rentals of real estate and/or personal property items.

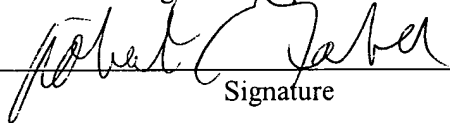
Claims 4-6 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1, and, therefore, are patentable for the same reasons, as well as because of the combination of features in those claims with the features set forth in the claim(s) from which they depend.

In view of the amendments to the claims and the foregoing remarks, it is submitted that the claims remaining in the application are allowable and their allowance is requested.

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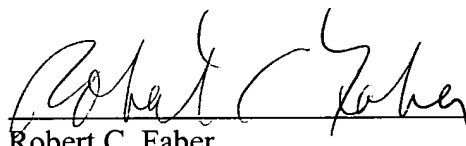
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March 30, 2005

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Respectfully submitted,



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